Sustainability for tour operators; The Travelife Partner

The tourism industry thrives on the natural environment, spectacles and natural phenomena, wildlife as well as draws from other industries and social links. In this regard, sustainability should be at the core of every tourism venture. Sustainability in this sense is engaging in activities that ensure continuity of the business. It involves business operations that are economically sound, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly. Sustainability in a business is also key as there is a rising trend in the demand for responsible products and services. Companies working towards sustainability score better on customer satisfaction, staff motivation and business efficiency with positive effects for their competitive advantage. Sustainability management is all about commitment and consistent responsible business practices. This includes products, how to monitor and manage impacts on the environment as well as supporting key your suppliers and consumers to adopt sustainability.

In this sense Travelife engages tourism enterprises in training, management and certification for tour companies committed to reach sustainability. Travelife has partnered with Ecotourism Kenya to provide an avenue to guide tour operators to attain sustainability in their business. A company that seeks to be recognized and affiliated to Travelife goes through three stages; engagement; first stage where the company commits itself and introduces the appropriate management procedures including appointing a sustainability coordinator who undergoes Travelife sustainability training, partner level and finally certified.

A Travelife partner status is the second stage in after engaging with Travelife. It involves an online baseline assessment of key business operations of a company to ensure it meets the standard basic criteria of sustainability. The partner status for a tour operator enables the company to
communicate its sustainability commitment and achievements with the support of the Travelife Partner logo. Travelife being an internationally recognized brand gives an affiliated company a competitive advantage. More importantly, a Travelife partner undergoes training on key sustainability principles to incorporate in their business.

The training covers;

1. **How to make and implement a sustainability mission statement, policy and action plan;**

**Sustainability mission statement**
This is essentially incorporating sustainability into your mission statement. It involves stating your commitment to protect the environment and biodiversity as well as business sustainability through fair pay and socially acceptable business practice.

**Sustainability policy**
This is a statement of the company’s sustainability and values. It further states the company’s objectives under the policy and actions to take to achieve the set objectives.

To have an idea of what a policy contains please refer [this previous ecobyte](#), which has an attached sample policy.

**Action plan**
An action plan should ideally include targets, actions, measures, responsibilities, time planning and a budget if possible.

---

**0. Company characteristics**
---

### 1. Sustainability Management & Legal compliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline assessment</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Start / End</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Overview partners / suppliers</td>
<td>A. Supplier Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and continuously update a list of Suppliers and monitor their performance levels.</td>
<td></td>
<td>01-01-2017 / 31-12-2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action plan**

1.11 Action plan

**A. Upload Action Plan**

Complete the report, upload the download and upload the action plan. Continuously keep it updated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Start / End</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-02-2017 / 31-12-2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Internal management: social policy & human rights

**Social policy and human rights**

2.22 Measuring employee satisfaction

**A. Employee Satisfaction Survey**

Create an employee satisfaction survey to be carried out once a year to measure their satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Start / End</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-11-2017 / 01-12-2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Internal Management: environment and community relations

**Procurement**

3.10 Cleaning materials

**A. Sustainable Cleaning Material**

Research on available sustainable cleaning materials and implement their use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Start / End</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07-04-2017 / 28-04-2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Energy**

---

*Sample Action plan that can be created from Travelife online system*
2. **How to improve internal sustainability management (e.g. how to ‘green’ your office and how to treat employees fairly);**

Greening your office involves opting for more environmentally friendly products and internal policies on water, energy and waste management. Examples of simple best practices in greening an office are using LED light bulbs, a switch off policy for equipment not in use and double sided printing.

![LED light bulb](https://www.ledlightbulffacts.com/image fotos/ledימון0018.png)

*Image courtesy of [LED light bulb facts]*

3. **Gauging and influencing sustainability impacts of your accommodation, transport and excursion providers and suppliers;**

This can be achieved through communication of your sustainability objective with an aim to influence policies of your service providers. A preferential policy for eco certified facilities would stimulate other accommodations to adopt a more environmentally friendly approach in business. This could also inclusion of sustainability clauses in contracts with the suppliers.

4. **How to positively motivate your customers to make more sustainable choices during their holidays**

Customers are the final consumers of tourism end products and services. By engaging them and promoting more sustainable choices, it creates a demand for more responsible products and services.

For further information on how you could become a partner and attain Travelife Certified status in Kenya, contact the Ecotourism Kenya secretariat ([ecoratingpa@ecotourismkenya.org](mailto:ecoratingpa@ecotourismkenya.org), [ecorating@ecotourismkenya.org](mailto:ecorating@ecotourismkenya.org)).